

SB 101 C STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Noble

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

Action Date: 05/30/17

Action: Do pass with amendments to the B-Eng bill. (Printed C-Eng.)

Vote: 7-0-2-0

Yeas: 7 - Keny-Guyer, Meek, Nearman, Noble, Piluso, Sanchez, Stark

Exc: 2 - Gorsek, Olson

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Cassandra Soucy, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows Department of Human Services (DHS) or law enforcement agency to not reveal information about a child abuse investigation to the school as condition of investigation. Prohibits school personnel from notifying any person other than DHS or law enforcement of the investigation or disclosing information obtained during the investigation. Specifies that school district and school personnel may not be held liable for civil damages as a result of compliance with notification and disclosure prohibitions. Specifies application of provisions to interview of suspected victim and not to person who is suspected of committing the abuse. Applies statute to private schools.

Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Investigations compromised through notification of parents or accused perpetrator
- Challenges in carrying out investigations at private schools
- Potential false accusations from investigations
- Privacy issues with ongoing investigations
- Lack of recording during investigation interviews

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

Department of Human Services reports receiving 20 percent of child abuse reports from schools during 2016. Current law requires law enforcement and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to notify school administrators when child abuse investigations occur on public school premises.

Senate Bill 101 C provides that DHS or law enforcement agencies are not required to reveal information about a child abuse investigation to the school. The measure applies these changes to both private and public schools. School personnel are prohibited from notifying any person other than DHS or law enforcement of the investigation or disclosing information obtained during the investigation. The measure also specifies that school district and school personnel may not be held liable for civil damages as a result of compliance with notification and disclosure prohibitions. Finally, the measure specifies application of provisions to interview of suspected victim and not to person who is suspected of committing the abuse.